Industries extends financial assistance to food processing units in the form of grant-in-aid @ 25% of the cost of plant and machinery and technical civil works subject to maximum of Rs. 50.00 lakhs in general areas or 33.33% subject to maximum of Rs. 75.00 lakhs in difficult areas such as Jammu & Kashmir, Himachal Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Sikkim and North Eastern States, A & N Islands, Lakshadweep and ITDP Areas.

Since one of the major constraints for low level of processing in agro-food products is lack of infrastructure such as cold chain facilities and inefficient supply chain, the Ministry in the 11th Plan proposes to implement a revamped scheme for infrastructure development under which, it will give enhanced level of financial assistance for setting up of Mega Food Parks, Cold Chain Infrastructure, modernisation of abattoirs, setting up of quality control laboratory etc.

Educational backwardness of Muslims

145. SHRI ABU ASIM AZMI: Will the Minister of HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware of the educational backwardness among the Muslims in the country;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the remedial steps being taken by Government for improvement of educational backwardness among the Muslims, most particularly the poor living below the poverty line?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT (SHRIMATI D. PURANDESWARI): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) According to the Justice Rajinder Sachar Committee as many as 25% of Muslim children in the 6-14 year ago group have either never attended school or have dropped out; and only one out of 25 under graduate students and one out of the 50 Post Graduate students is found to be a Muslim, based on a Sample Survey.

(c) Under the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) special focus is given to the districts where the educationally backward communities reside*. The Government is also implementing the Area Intensive and Madarsa Modernization Programme to ensure that children studying in Madarsas get an education comparable in standard to the mainstream schools. Subject to finalization of the Xlth Plan, it is proposed to assist in the establishment of one college in each district, including district with Muslim minority concentration, with low Gross Enrolment Ratio.

Selection Committee for IIM Directors

146. SHRI B.K. HARIPRASAD: Will the Minister of HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have initiated the process of appointment of new directors to the Boards of Indian Institutes of Management through Selection Committee, constituted for the purpose and later the same would be approved by the CCA; and

(b) if so, whether the Selection Committee for each IIM would comprise the Chairman of the Board of Governors, eminent academics and experts?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT (SHRIMATI D. PURANDESWARI): (a) Yes Sir, the Government has initated the process of appointment of new Directors to the Boards of Indian Institutes of Management through Search-cum-Selection Committees to be constituted for this purpose. The appointment will be made by the Appointments Committee of the Cabinet (ACC), out of the panel recommended by the Search-cum-Selection Committee.

(b) Yes Sir.

Medium of instruction in schools

147. DR. VIJAY MALLYA: Will the Minister of HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether there is any Government policy on the medium of instruction to be followed by schools in States;

(b) whether there is any restriction in the number of schools that each State should have, where English is the medium of instructions; and

(c) the basic guidelines for sanctioning new schools?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT (MD. ALI ASHRAF FATMI): (a) National Curriculum Framework (NCF)-2005 approved by Central Advisory Board of Education, recommends that mother tongue or home language should be the medium of learning in schools at the primary stage.

(b) As per Affiliation Byelaws of Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) there is no restriction in the number of schools affiliated to it having English as the medium of instruction.

(c) Schools, are given affiliations by School Eduation Boards, after they fulfill the conditions laid down in their affiliation byelaws.

Engineering colleges recognised by AICTE

148. SHRI THENNALA G. BALAKRISHNA PILLAI: Will the Minister of HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

(a) the total number of engineering colleges recognized by AICTE in the country, so far, State-wise;

(b) the total number of new engineering colleges applied for recognition in this academic year; and

(c) the number of engineering colleges which have fulfilled the norms of recognition?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT (SHRIMATI D. PURANDESWARI): (a) to (c) As per the information furnished by All India Council For Technical Education (AICTE), the number of engineering colleges recognized as on 31st July, 2007 is 1617. 403 new engineering colleges have applied for recognition with AICTE in the academic year 2007-08 out of which 106 engineering colleges fulfill the norms and have been issued letter of approval. The State-wise details are in the Statement.